

# HISTORICAL RESTORATION OF THE USU PASSIVE RECREATION GARDEN

Laval Morris was the founder of the Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning department at USU. He is an important figure in the history of our university the state and intermountain region. One of the last remaining landscapes that he designed for the university is USU's Passive Recreation Garden.

Over time the garden has become degraded, overrun by invasive plants and by last year, had become almost completely destroyed. It is important to preserve and restore this garden because of its importance to Laval and to LAEP's history.

My thesis is a documentation of the gardens importance and its history, from conception to its current degraded state and everything in-between. I have tracked down the original planting plan for the site, old photographs, meeting minutes and other correspondences and conducted interviews of people who knew Laval, the garden and what it meant to him. As part of my thesis, I have also developed reconstruction and restoration plans for the future.

This poster is a brief summary of my complete honors thesis.



## GARDEN LOCATION

The Passive Recreation Garden is located on the north east corner of 700 East and 600 North on the Utah State University Campus.



THIS IS THE SITE of a scenic recreation area under construction. Located north of the old Forestry building, the corner will feature a place for visitors as well as campus people to linger or participate in passive recreation activities. Designed by the Utah State Landscape Architecture Department, the area will center around two pools of water on different levels connected by a waterfall. There will also be walks, stairs and seats. According to Professor Laval S. Morris, the area is inadequate for anything else, and is to be converted into a beautiful attraction.

## ARTICLE FROM STUDENT NEWSPAPER DURING CONSTRUCTION

SEPT. 14 '1961  
Passive Recreation Garden is completed

1973  
LAEP service activity for LAEP Week (last garden cleanup)

1959  
President Daryl Chase commissions Laval Morris to design the garden.

1965  
Laval Morris retires and garden Stops being maintained by LAEP



## YEARS OF NEGLECT

According to his students and coworkers, Laval loved the garden and used it extensively as a teaching tool. They referred to it as 'Laval's Baby'.

Following his retirement the maintenance of the garden was de-prioritized by the LAEP department.

Wendell Morse, Landscape Architect with USU Facilities, taught the Plant Materials course in LAEP for 6 years.

When LAEP relinquished control of the garden, he took up the care taking responsibility and maintained it nicely for many years.

Following his retirement there was no longer a personal advocate for the garden and it started its slow decline.

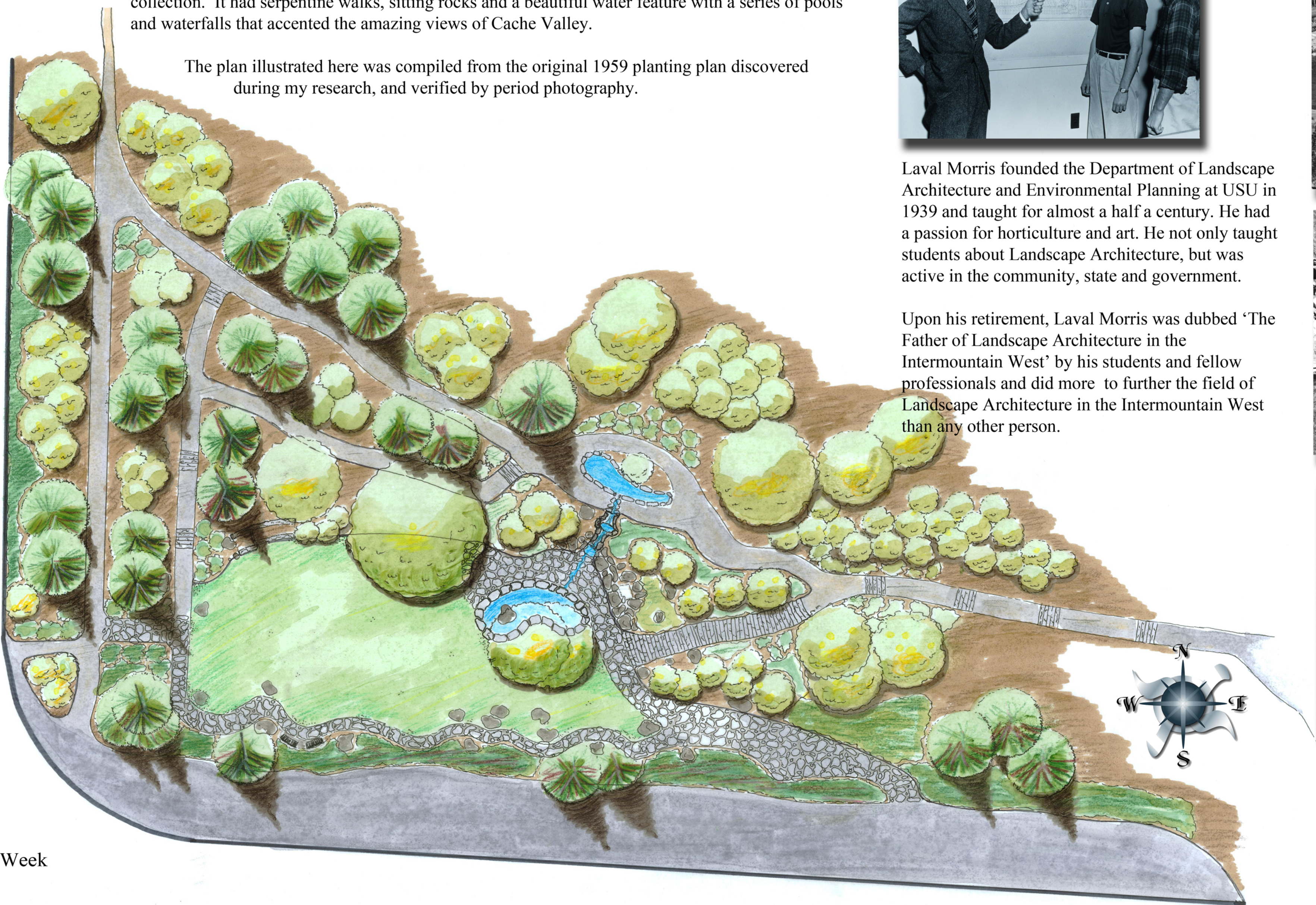
Over the last twenty years the garden has become vastly overgrown. The once beautiful garden was all but lost. Then in 2004 the Living Learning Community was built. Because of its adjacency to the garden, people started using it as a major pedestrian corridor.

Currently there is a renewed interest in the garden and it is now in the restoration planning stages.

## ORIGINAL GARDEN PLAN

The Passive Recreation Garden was designed by Morris in the naturalistic, informal style. The Garden was landscaped with hard to find plants that were donated by Laval Morris from his personal collection. It had serpentine walks, sitting rocks and a beautiful water feature with a series of pools and waterfalls that accented the amazing views of Cache Valley.

The plan illustrated here was compiled from the original 1959 planting plan discovered during my research, and verified by period photography.



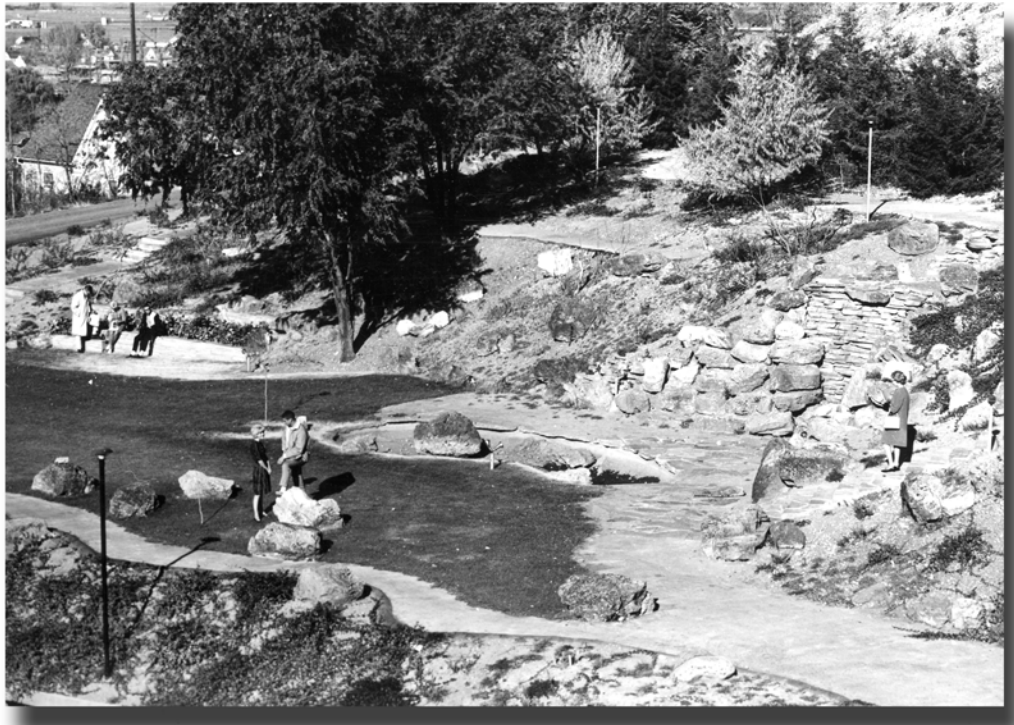
## LAVAL S. MORRIS



Laval Morris founded the Department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning at USU in 1939 and taught for almost a half a century. He had a passion for horticulture and art. He not only taught students about Landscape Architecture, but was active in the community, state and government.

Upon his retirement, Laval Morris was dubbed 'The Father of Landscape Architecture in the Intermountain West' by his students and fellow professionals and did more to further the field of Landscape Architecture in the Intermountain West than any other person.

## THE GARDEN IS FINISHED



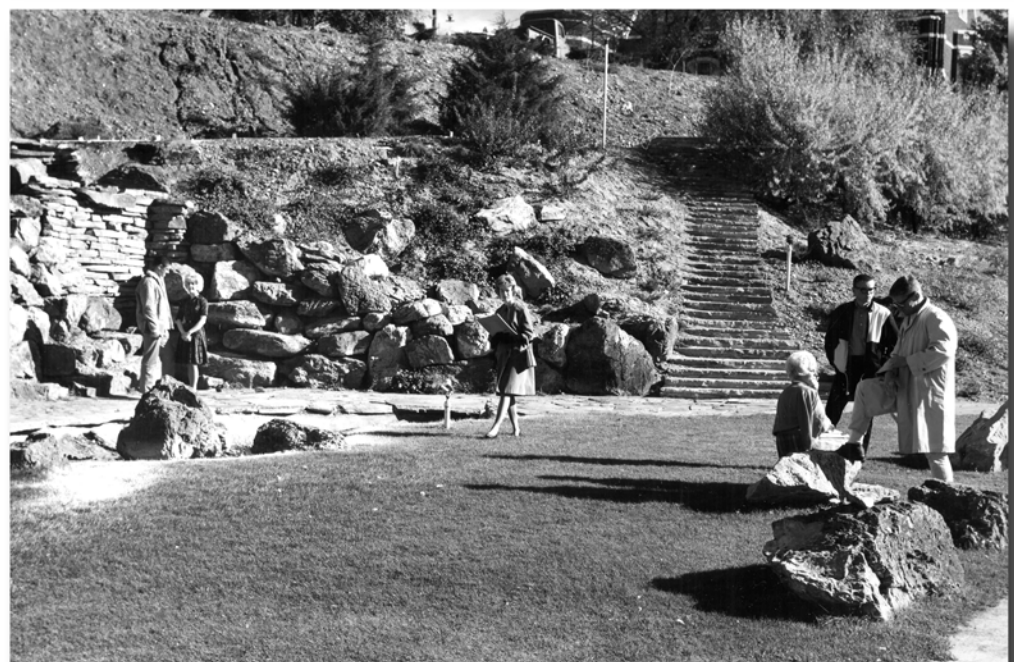
These photos illustrate the garden shortly after completion.

Students enjoyed going to the garden because it was the first place to warm up in the spring. This is due to its south west orientation and because it is in a sunken area, it offered protection from wind.

The garden was also used by the Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning Department as a teaching garden.

In the Fall of 1961 the Landscape Construction class helped put the finishing touches on the garden. It was used by the Plant Materials class for years because there were plants in the garden that weren't found anywhere else on campus.

The garden used to be a popular place for graduation and family photos not only because of its beauty, but also because of the panoramic view it offered of the Cache Valley.



2004  
LLC construction begins and the irrigation water lines are cut. This is the last time the garden has had supplementary water.

OCT. 22 '2009  
A group of over 60 volunteers, lead by Jeremy Nelson and Scot DuHadway, clean out most of the green waste and litter from garden.

## GRADUAL DECLINE OF GARDEN

SUMMER 2009  
Invasive Species Volunteer Cleanup Lead by Joe Woodward and Arborist Ben Harris.  
The garden was overgrown with Siberian Elm trees. The volunteer group spent most of the summer clearing them out.

## NEW GARDEN PLAN

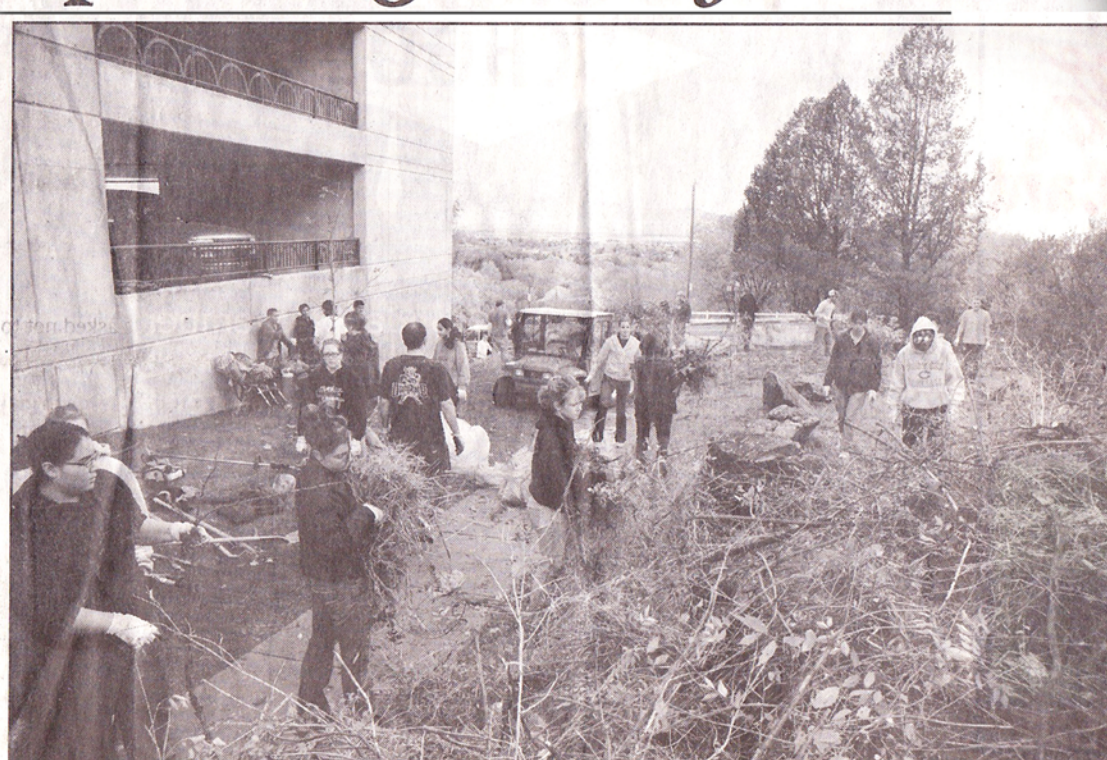
The Passive Recreation Garden is going to be restored as a teaching/demonstration garden. It will be planted with many different types of plants in 5 key exhibit areas. As shown below, the hillsides will primarily be native and woodland plantings, next to the parking garage will have 2 exhibits; the perennial and grass exhibit and the perennial and ground cover exhibit, the turf area will be utilized as a turf grass demonstration area and traditional exhibit and along most of the garden paths will be used as a native planting exhibit. The garden will not be exactly as Laval once designed it, but it will continue to be used as a teaching garden. This is what Laval originally used it for and it will continue to be used for that purpose.



## GARDEN CLEANUP



## Sprouting seeds of service



STUDENT VOLUNTEERS participate in the revitalization project north of the Aggie Parking Terrace. Participants helped revamp the abandoned landscape. PETE P. SMITH/SOUTH photo

On October 22nd 2009 a volunteer crew of over 60 members participated in a cleanup activity of Laval's garden.

Over the course of 6 hours, we hauled out 11 truck loads of green waste and years of litter.

Because of the efforts of volunteer groups, the garden is on its way to once again becoming a beautiful place.